The Mexican Gang

AND

Mexican Headquarters

BY

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

FROM ITS bureau in Mexico City *The World* of New York received this news item:

MEXICO CITY, Jan. 25.—*Much excitement was caused here today by a raid on the Josefina Convent in the heart of the city. The police arrested twenty nuns and detained a large group of students.*

The parents of the students flocked to the convent to obtain the release of their children, and a large crowd gathered around the convent entrances.

The arrests brought the total number of Catholics imprisoned at Police Headquarters to more than 100. *Scores of Catholics were arrested last Sunday for attendance at Masses. A number of Catholic women have been arrested for distributing postcards showing the recent execution of Padre Miguel [Father Michael] Projuarez.*

In itself the above story doesn't seem very bad; but to learn its full significance read this pamphlet. Francis McCullagh accurately describes Police Headquarters and tells how innocent children, pure nuns, decent men and women are huddled together with the harlots, the murderers, the very dregs of Mexico City's underworld. And the monstrous crime for which these children, nuns, decent men and women are arrested is their assistance at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass!

Surely it is about time that American Catholics should make their voice heard in strong and insistent protest against the corrupt gang who are not ruling Mexico but destroying her; who are robbing millions of people of their fundamental human right; who are consumed with an insensate hatred of Almighty God; who are making fair faces before the outside world, while their hands are dripping with the fat of sacrilege!

HAROLD PURCELL, C.P.,
EDITOR OF THE SIGN.

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About the Author

FRANCIS MCCULLAGH, author of "The Mexican Gang," and "At Mexican Headquarters," scored his first great beat at the battle of Port Arthur, 1903. He was on a ship that slipped out of the bay and gave the *New York Herald* its news of the great victory of the Japanese over the Russians three days before the rest of the world's correspondents could get free of the censorship of both sides.

He has covered every war and every great event in the world with brilliant success since then. He has traveled in nearly every part of the world. He knows many of the world's languages and most of the history of its nations.

He was working on a Russian newspaper in Moscow when the World War broke out—but that interrupted his journalistic career. He was too busy fighting as a captain in the Irish Fusileers, fighting with them through the bloody shambles of Gallipoli—to write about it.

He went into Siberia with a British Mission and saved its entire personnel by his own knowledge of Russian when the Bolsheviks smashed the white Admiral Koltchak and his British supporters in 1918! It led to one of McCullagh's greatest exploits. Disguising himself as a Siberian peasant he penetrated alone to Ekaterinburg and was the first non-Russian to reach the scene of the death of the Czar and his family and to interview their executioner, Yurosof. His account of that tragedy again startled the world. By it all subsequent tales of the fate of the royal family have been judged.

His stories from Russia, fearlessly defying the Bolshevik censorship, roused the world to save the lives of the Russian clergymen whom the Reds were juridically murdering in the year 1921.

McCullagh has always been an independent, the last of the great tribe of correspondents such as Kipling sang. He was last heard of a year ago traveling up the Amazon by canoe, crossing the Andes and starting down the West Coast to Cape Horn.

Some months ago he returned from Mexico. He had scented a story there. Quietly, on his own, speaking perfect Spanish, he slipped into and through the country for nearly a month before going to the Capital. Through these experienced eyes, in the light of this ripe and utterly fearless judgment, a picture of Mexico as it is now comes to the world.

Francis McCullagh has smashed through the Mexican censorship.

This famous correspondent has a story that may change a whole trend of history. He penetrated Bolshevik Russia on his own during the height of the Terror. He has done the same in Mexico. He has seen things that will open the eyes of the United States. His charges are backed by statements of fact, with dates, names and places.

The Mexican Gang

Operating Under Calles The Turk

IN ONE of his great oratorical outbursts, President Wilson said: "There is one thing I have got a great enthusiasm about, I might almost say a reckless enthusiasm, and that is human liberty. . . . I want to say a word about Mexico. . . . I hold it as a fundamental principle, and so do you, that every people has the right to determine its own form of government; and until this recent revolution in Mexico, until the end of the Diaz reign, 80 per cent of the people of Mexico never had a 'look in' in determining who should be their governors or what their government should be. *Now, I am for the* 80 *per cent!*"

Events have proved President Wilson to have been all wrong in his diagnosis of Mexico's illness, for as a result of his spirited attempts to give every *peon* a vote, nobody in Mexico has a vote, or, if he has, it is not counted. But there can be no denying President Wilson's honesty or his enthusiasm in what he considered to be the cause of human liberty or the vigor with which he acted. Let us consider for a moment how he did act. First of all, he absolutely refused to recognize Victoriano Huerta as President of Mexico. Next, he allowed Carranza and Villa and all the other *insurrectos* and *bandidos* who were hanging around the American frontier to import arms from Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, and any part of the United States they liked. Thirdly, he prevented Huerta from importing arms from the United States, and when the poor man tried to import them from Germany in order to defend himself and his people against the brigands who were sacking churches and violating nuns all over the north of the country, he sent the American Fleet to seize those arms in the harbor of Vera Cruz.

The result was that President Huerta had to flee the country, leaving it to the edifying gang which is now in power. Now, Huerta was not a bad man. I shall quote what was said of him by the Ambassador who represented the United States in Mexico at the time of his accession to power—Mr. Henry Lane Wilson: "He was a devout Roman

Catholic, a believer in the Diaz regime and policies, and with all his faults I am convinced that he was a sincere patriot, and, in happier times, might have had a career honorable to himself and useful to his country. He fell from power, the victim of narrow-visioned American diplomacy, and died a sacrifice to the same overweening jealousy and egoism which, with the power of a great people behind it, had brought about his downfall."

The Ambassador adds that "perhaps no other Mexican Cabinet has contained men of such exceptional ability and high character as did the Cabinet of General Huerta."

CALLES THE EX-BARTENDER

These men, I may add, were Catholics, highly educated, capable administrators, infinitely superior in every way to the *canaille* which afterwards came into power as a result of President Wilson's interference. Calles himself is of half Asiatic, half Indian descent. I visited his native town of Guaymas lately and found that he was known there as *el Turco* (the Turk), so that possibly he is sprung from that very race which massacred the Armenians and hated the Pope as the Devil hates holy water. He was a bartender in Guaymas; and his half-brother, Arturo Malvido Elias, now Mexican Counsul General in New York City, was owner of the bar. The place was heavily insured, and, immediately afterwards, burned down.

This is the head of the present gang; and his satellites are worthy of him. One of them, Luis de Leon, whom he made his Secretary for Agriculture, had no knowledge of agriculture or of any animal employed in agriculture save the bull, for he had been a professional bullfighter. The Rev. Moses Saenz, sub-secretary of the Department of Education, is a Methodist minister, despite the article in the Constitution which declares that a clergyman is not competent to hold any post under government.

It was this gentleman who recently had the bad taste to hint, at the Williamstown Round Table Conference, that Mexico might become Protestant. This was a sop thrown to the American people in order that they might continue their support of Calles; but, as a matter of fact, Protestantism has no chance of succeeding in Mexico, even if Catholicism is uprooted, for *el Turco* and his friends fear it much more

than they fear Catholicism, because of the inevitable "Americanization" which it brings with it. Senor Moses Saenz they do not fear, because he is of Jewish origin, and really, has no religion at all. His brother Aaron, also a Methodist, was for a long time head of the Foreign Office; and in that capacity he had to deal with the British protests in connection with the attacks on Rosalie Evans—attacks which culminated in her assassination. These protests he returned to the British authorities "because their tone is not polite"; and, in the letter which contained this phrase, he announced that "the Mexican Government does not recognize the diplomatic character of Mr. Cummins and does not desire to hold any sort of intercourse with him" — Mr. Cummins being the British *Charge d'Affaires* who on the very eve of this American lady's brutal murder had protested in firm but gentlemanly language against the criminal negligence of the Mexican authorities in her regard. I need not remind the reader that England's answer to Aaron's letter was a complete severance of all diplomatic relations between the two countries.

CONTROLLING THE PRESS

Aaron Saenz's name, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, also appears at the foot of the disgraceful secret telegram published by the New York *American* on December 2, 1927, authorizing Arturo M. Elias, the Mexican President's half-brother and Mexican Counsul-General in New York City, to give a bribe of $50,000 to an American newspaper syndicate to counteract newspaper criticism of Calles in the United States, in other words to deny, among other things, that there was any religious persecution.

"I have been able," writes Aaron to Arturo, "to convince the Citizen President of the necessity which exists of controlling the Press in an effective manner."

The Press he alludes to is the greatest Press in the world, the Press of the United States; and apparently there are on that Press Judases who took the thirty pieces of silver, and then denied vociferously the truthful accounts which were sent out of Mexico about the tortures and death inflicted on martyrs. Could baseness go further than this?

Aaron Saenz, I might add, resigned from the Foreign Office some time ago in order to become manager of Obre-

gon's election campaign, but, as the two rival candidates have been eliminated, it is to be presumed that Aaron will return to the Foreign Office and, when Obregon takes office, next July, Aaron will be his Minister for Foreign Affairs.

CRIMES AGAINST AMERICANS

Serrano, who till recently belonged to the gang though he afterwards plotted against it and was consequently assassinated, had started his life as a fiddler in a house of ill-fame, but afterwards joined a circus in a humble capacity, and by sheer force of genius raised himself to the position of chief clown. General Arnulfo Gomez began life as a peddler.

This is the sort of gang that President Wilson's "reckless enthusiasm" for "human liberty" placed in power. And very little gratitude have they shown to him or to President Coolidge, or to the American people. Let us see the shape this gratitude has taken.

From sources, whose reliability is incontestable, I have received the following table of crimes committed against Americans alone:

546 murders	508 expropriations
855 robberies	550 trespasses
668 assaults	109 deportations
106 kidnappings	55 expulsions
847 property seizures	6,487 arrests

This table is not complete. It is the best I have been able to gather from authentic sources. But I do not doubt that the American State Department has all the data I have and 10 per cent more.

Of the 1,355 seizures of property and expropriations listed above the State Department has a partial record. Commercial Counsellor Wythe at Mexico City recently reported to Washington that 104 of these Americans had been divested of approximately 470,000 acres without compensation.

Mr. Wythe's investigation covers about 7 per cent of land seizures. If his figures are correct—and doubtless they are as far as they go—American citizens have been robbed of more than two million acres of land which they bought and paid for, and for which the Mexican Government has not recompensed them to the extent of one cent.

The American public has been led to believe that the

Mexican Government has been cutting up vast foreign land holdings. That is not true. The victim is the small American farmer, not the great landowner.

CALLES AS AN ANTI-AMERICAN

This is bad enough, but worse is to follow. Mexico owes the United States many millions of dollars for re-payment of loans and for payment of compensation. Some driblets are, it is true, being squeezed out of her with infinite difficulty once a year by Messrs. J. P. Morgan and the International Committee of Bankers, but she — or, to be more accurate, President Calles—has spent millions on teaching Communism to the Indians, on gifts to the Bolsheviks of Russia, England, and China; and on gratuities to corrupt American journalists, publicists, propagandists, preachers, and politicians. Only a year ago Calles squandered over a million dollars in an attempt to start a revolution in Nicaragua, so as to establish an anti-American Government there. When things were absolutely quiet in Nicaragua, Calles stirred up trouble by means of money, arms and bandits. He succeeded in forming a rebel force which he called the "Liberals" and the "Constitutionalists," exactly as the Carranzaists called themselves "Liberals" and "Constitutionalists." In the latter case, President Wilson was carried off his feet by the very name. He thought it represented 80 per cent of the people, whereas it did not represent 8 per cent; and dearly has Mexico paid for his mistake. I now notice with satisfaction that the American newspapers, when speaking of the "Liberals" and the "Constitutionalists" of Nicaragua, use inverted commas; but I do not understand why they do not also use inverted commas when speaking of the "Liberals" and the "Constitutionalists" of Mexico, who are even greater fakes than their namesakes in Nicaragua.

Let us continue, however, our investigations into the gratitude of Calles towards the United States. Exactly four years ago, his colleague, Obregon, was placed in a hopeless position by the rebellion of Adolpho de la Huerta, but President Calles saved him by selling to him a large supply of arms and ammunition — 15,000 Enfield rifles, five million rounds of ammunition, eleven airplanes, and much else besides. A year ago, Calles sent most of these arms and rounds of ammunition to Nicaragua, where they were used in shoot-

ing down American marines who were trying to keep order, and Nicaraguan soldiers who were friendly to the United States.

His object was to prevent the American construction of the proposed transcontinental canal, to remove Nicaragua altogether from the American sphere of influence, and to attach it as a tail to the Bolshevik kite being flown by Mexico. To prevent the Americans from ever constructing that canal, he offered to make a treaty with Japan for the wholesale introduction into the district, through which the canal would run, of Japanese soldier-settlers.

THE EXODUS FROM MEXICO

Even now, Mexicans are pouring out of Mexico into the United States at the rate of five thousand a day, and their places are taken by Japanese and Chinese. Thirty-three Japanese families landed at Manzanillo while I was on the West Coast. They are to colonize the hacienda of Estranzuela in Jalisco and other haciendas in other states. Twenty-seven Japanese families were due to arrive a few days later but I do not know how many have come since.

In some places there are more Orientals than Mexicans. In Mexicali, for example, there are 7,000 Chinese to only 4,000 Mexicans.

Nothing is clearer than the fact that Calles is by far the worst and most dangerous enemy the United States has in all the world at the present moment. He subsidizes Bolshevism because he knows that America hates it. He shows special attention to the Soviet Embassy because Washington refuses to have a Soviet Embassy. He imports Japanese because America excludes them. He backs Nicaraguan "Liberals" because they hate America. He has subsidized and encouraged the most poisonous anti-American agitation throughout all Latin America.

I am afraid that America takes too much interest in Europe and too little interest in Latin America, which is gradually drifting away from her and becoming hostile, yet Europe is, in every sense of the word, on a different hemisphere whereas Latin America is peculiarly close. During a recent tour throughout all Central and South America, I was astonished at the hostility manifested to the United States. I was in Buenos Aires a year ago, when the Nica-

raguan difficulty was acute; and was astonished at the success which the Callesta propaganda obtained there. Not only did the Argentine Communists hold public demonstrations to denounce the United States; but learned societies, universities and Conservative newspapers were all inveigled into anti-American declarations. By able letters to the local newspapers, the Passionist Fathers in Buenos Aires did their best to put the matter in the true light; but what could they do against such a storm of abuse?

And to whom does America owe all this? To Calles, the pet of the Ku Klux Klan, the idol of Mr. Frederick J. Libby.

THE CESSPOOL OF THE NEW WORLD

As the Kremlin has become a cesspool for all the evil of the Old Word, so has Chapultepec Palace become a cesspool for all the evil of the New World. Calles has gathered round him there a choice collection of American renegades who have left their country for their country's good, and who now spend their time instructing their host in Uncle Sam's weak points so that the old man will get a knockout blow every time there is a diplomatic battle. A typical specimen is Senor Roberto Habermann, a Hungarian Jew who emigrated to this country and took out naturalization papers, but ran into Mexico as soon as he was called to fight in the Great War. Honest men and women have great difficulty, sometimes, in entering this country, but not so Senor Roberto: he was in Washington and New York and all over the United States last summer on a Mexican diplomatic passport, doing all the harm he could; and he is frequently an honored guest of the American Federation of Labor.

And, speaking of the A. F. of L., I must say that I am surprised at its support of Calles, whom it has hailed as "a Labor President," a "lover of liberty and humanity," and a champion of the Proletariat. The A. F. of L., disapproves of Russian Bolshevism; but it has far more reason to disapprove of Mexican Bolshevism and of its High Priest, who is using Labor for his own ends and is certainly no true friend of Labor. As proof of this, I need only point to the fact that Mexican Labor is leaving Mexico at the rate of five thousand a day. Calles has constructed for them what he

calls a terrestrial Paradise, but they are escaping out of it like men escaping from a house afire.

As for the Catholics in the A. F. of L., I must put down their support of Calles to pure ignorance of Mexican conditions; and I would urge them most earnestly to correct that ignorance by due investigation. In fact I think it is their bounden duty to do so, for the influence of their organization at Washington has had a great deal to do with the feebleness of the State Department in dealing with Calles. In making this investigation they should not go to people who are on Calles' payroll; and I am sorry to say that quite a large number of American journalists and authors are in that degrading position. The *New York American* of November 17th promised to publish next day the names of some of them, but apparently Mr. William Randolph Hearst was scared out of his life or else moved to pity by the mob of paid journalists who wired him and visited his office on that occasion, for next day no names appeared.

WHERE THE TRUTH CAN BE FOUND

If they want to find out the truth about Mexico, let them go to the best sources. Let them ask Mexican workmen who have emigrated to this country in millions, so that they can get work, and send their children to a Christian school, where there are no sex lectures as there are in the godless Mexican schools. Let them question, if possible, any American consul or diplomat who has been in Mexico, or any employee of any American Consulate in Mexico or of the American Embassy in Mexico City. I met many of these gentlemen myself, and, though not one of them is a Catholic, they all took the same view of Calles as I take in this article. And it was the same in the time of President Wilson. Mr. Henry Lane Wilson regarded the party now headed by Calles exactly as I regard them; and the same can be said of Mr. Nelson O'Shaughnessy and of all the other American diplomats. But President Wilson refused to be guided by these Spanish-speaking experts, who had a thorough knowledge of Mexico, but preferred to take the advice of men like Governor John Lind who did not know Spanish and had never been in Mexico.

To return to the quotation from President Wilson with which I started this article, today less than 10 per cent of

the Mexican people support Calles in his Socialistic and anti-religious policy, yet the great American newspapers and the great party leaders in this country seem to take the matter very quietly. I have just traveled down the Mexican west coast through Sonora and Sinaloa, and across to Guadalajara; then to Mexico City; and afterwards north through Hidalgo, Potosi, and Neuvo Leon to Laredo and Texas, but though I mixed with all sorts of people, I never once met a single Mexican who approved of Calles' anti-Catholic policy.

MEXICO A CATHOLIC COUNTRY

I found Mexico to be, in fact, a thoroughly Catholic country, quite as Catholic as Belgium or Bavaria; more Catholic than Ireland for it contains no Ulster and no Belfast.

If there were any strong anti-Catholic movement in Mexico, one would find it in the great cities, and especially in the Federal Capital; but the Federal Capital is as Catholic as Dublin, and Guadalajara, another great city, is even more Catholic than Dublin. In the churches of Guadalajara, Mass is no longer said owing to the interdict, but the Faithful meet in the churches for prayer no less than five times a day. And on these occasions it is not merely the intellectuals who make up the congregations: the majority are workmen and their wives and children. I often passed hours in the great cathedral, and the continual procession of worshippers was one of the most edifying sights I have ever seen in my life.

Though the Blessed Sacrament is not there and the lamp of the sanctuary extinct, candles burn on the high altar from five in the morning till seven in the evening; and in front of the altar rails is stationed a guard of little children in the white robes of first communicants.

Now, this would be impossible if Calles were supported by any large section of the population; even if he were supported by 1 per cent of the people of Jalisco, that 1 per cent could be relied upon to make an uproar in some of the churches; but no disturbance has ever taken place.

There are good newspapers in Guadalajara; and they have always been extremely Catholic. At the time of my visit, the censorship weighed heavily on them, and prevented them from publishing any Catholic news. Calles had consequently to import from Europe a Socialist and anti-clerical ruffian called D. A. Siquerios, who had committed a murder

in his native city of Barcelona, from which he had consequently to flee. Siquerios now edits a virulently anti-religious rag called *El 130,* that being the article in the Queretaro Constitution which has led to the present persecution.

This paper is not only anti-religious; it is also anti-American; and, to crown all, it is indecent. President Calles supports it, otherwise it could not exist, for it has been unable to get a single advertisement from the good business people of Guadalajara, and I doubt very much if it has a single genuine subscriber on its lists.

AMERICAN DIPLOMATS' VIEW

I happen to know that copies of that paper have been sent to the State Department at Washington, with all the virulently anti-American onslaughts underlined and that the State Department knows that 90 per cent of the population of Jalisco are opposed to Calles' anti-religious policy. The diplomatic and consular experts whom America keeps on the spot are to a man opposed to this anti-religious policy and in favor of the 90 per cent. I speak not only of Guadalajara but of Sonora, Sinaloa, Hidalgo, the Federal District, and every other part of Mexico which I visited. As I have already pointed out, all the American consuls and diplomatists whom I met in Mexico took the same view as I do and as THE SIGN does of the persecution which Calles has let loose, though not a single one of them is a Catholic.

In Mexico City there is the same edifying attendance at the churches. An additional proof of the Catholicity of the people was afforded on November 24th, when Father Miguel Augustin Projuarez was buried, after having been shot on the charge of being connected with the attempt to assassinate General Alvaro Obregon. On that occasion, according to the wires from Mexico City, over 20,000 people assembled in the cemetery and along the route of the funeral procession in order to pay their last respects to the corpse; and in all that great multitude there was not found even a single man to cheer for Calles.

Where, then, is the 80 per cent which supports Calles? I repeat that not 10 per cent supports him. This would have been made evident at the coming Presidential elections, if those elections had been allowed to take their course; but Calles saw such a drift of public opinion against his colleague

Obregon that he had the other two candidates eliminated. Serrano he had assassinated; Gomez he outlawed; and now Gomez, too, is dead. There is at present no candidate for the Presidency save one, General Obregon, whose candidature is unconstitutional, owing to that article in the Queretaro Constitution which prohibits re-election. But Obregon and Calles have concluded a pact whereby they are to succeed one another in the Presidency until one dies or is assassinated, in which case the Bolshevik Morones will take the vacant place.

RUSSIA AND MEXICO COMPARED

In other words, the votes of the *peons* are not even counted; and there is no constitutional government in Mexico. The present regime in that country resembles very closely the regime in Russia. Calles is the Mexican Stalin; Roberto Cruz is the Mexican Dzerzhinsky; the Crom and the Agraristas are the Bolshevik Party which upholds the Government; in both countries the army is the blind instrument of the Dictator; and in both cases there is not a single vestige of constitutional government.

Nevertheless, Mexico is a Catholic country. I realized this keenly as I sat one day several months ago on the shores of the marvelous Bay of Mazatlan in Sinaloa, with the Pacific Ocean in front, and with the shore on either side broken into lofty, sharp-pointed pinnacles of rock. On the inaccessible summit of one of those pinnacles, Mount Talpita it is called, stands a cross planted by Alvarado the Conquistador. Those old warriors sometimes erected crosses on summits so inaccessible, on rocky islets so unapproachable, that the degenerates who rule Mexico today lack the nerve to reach them in order to tear them down: they confine themselves to abusing the cross in the taverns of the Capital.

But meanwhile the cross still stands triumphant on headland and on mountain peak, on pyramid and teocallis and temple of the Sun. In Cholulu, a sacred city of ancient Mexico, the Aztecs erected a great pyramid to the god Quetzalcoatl. The conquistadores allowed that pyramid to stand, but they planted on top of it not only a cross but a whole church, the superb church of Nuestra Senora de los Remedios.

Catholicity has entered the marrow of Mexico's bones. One can see that while traveling through the country, while

walking the streets of any Mexican city. The names of the Divinity, of our Lord, of His Blessed Mother, of His Saints and of other great Catholics cover the whole map of the country. I need only mention such names as Nombre de Dios, la Sierre Madre Occidentale, la Sierra Madre Orientale, Los Tres Marias, Santa Maria, San Jose, Vera Cruz.

If one stands at any street corner in Mexico City and reads aloud the names on the trolley cars that pass, he feels as if he were saying the Litany of the Saints. Even in the courtyards of apartment houses and business premises one frequently sees holy statues. On the staircase of the building where the British Consulate General is situated there is a large and beautiful statue of Our Lady, with freshly gathered flowers always in front of it.

FIFTY YEARS OF AMERICAN INTERFERENCE

Mexico is a thoroughly Catholic country, and it would have a good and honest Catholic Government today were it not for the continual interference of the United States during the last fifty years in support of "Liberals" and anti-clericals like Calles. Freedom would come gradually as it came in England, which was under a re-actionary and oligarchical form of Goverment throughout the whole eighteenth century; but it was absurd of President Wilson to talk of giving the vote to Mexican *peons* while making no effort to enforce in the Southern States of his own country the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which lays down the law that "the right of the citizen of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States, or by any State, on account of race, color, or previous conditions of servitude."

I shall conclude with another quotation, this time from the last message of Theodore Roosevelt. It is as follows:

"Mexico is our Balkan Peninsula, and during the last five years, thanks largely to Mr. Wilson's able assistance, it has been reduced to a condition as hideous as that of the Balkan Peninsula under the Turkish rule. We are in honor bound to remedy this wrong."

At Mexican Headquarters

Seen and Heard November 24, 1927

JUST OFF the animated Paseo de la Reforma in Mexico City stands a huge skeleton of rusty iron — a vast structure which might, under certain circumstances, be described as ghostly, for a belated reveller, seeing the moon shine through it, might feel as startled as the Ancient Mariner when he saw the moon and stars shine through the Ship of the Dead.

It is the framework of the House of Congress, begun by Porfirio Diaz in 1910, and not yet finished, never apparently to be finished, for all work on it ceased long ago— ceased as soon as the *Constitutionalistas* grasped the reins of Government, though one would have expected, on the contrary, that, since these gentry profess to be Parliamentarians of the most extreme and voluble type, their advent would hasten its completion. But instead of growing up, it is literally growing down. It is visibly decreasing in size, because, with the permission of the Government, an American company which has entered into a contract for the construction of certain roads is helping itself freely to old iron from this legislative scrap-heap.

IN FAVOR OF OBREGON

Of the temporary Chamber of Deputies I do not speak, as it is in every way beneath contempt architecturally and otherwise. After the *coup d'Etat* of Calles in October last, it expelled, at the bidding of the Dictator, all deputies who were not obedient to him. Some of them had already been murdered, despite their legislative immunity; but these also were expelled by name as if they were alive. It now offers to increase the Presidential term to six years; and the first President to benefit by this generosity will be Obregon, who violates the Constitution by standing for re-election, and who is also ineligible under the article which bans those who have taken part in revolutionary movements.

I prefer, therefore, to speak of the ghostly Chamber at the end of the Avenida del Palacio Legislativo and forming

one side of the Plaza de la Republica. The Plaza de la Republica is worthy of the unfinished building which is its principal ornament, being an abomination of desolation, grass-grown and deserted, dead as a forum in Pompeii. A workman was crossing it very slowly while I paid that first visit to it which I am now going to describe, and his steps echoed hollowly through the silent square.

This square really reminded me of Pompeii. In Pompeii you are shown the baker's shop and the sculptor's studio, with everything left just as they were when the lava and the ashes came: in the Plaza de la Republica you are shown the stonemasons' sheds, the carpenters' benches, the clerk's office, and the foreman's room, from all of which life fled when the revolutionary lava rushed down from the Sierra Madre and petrified them into eternal immobility. In the Plaza de la Republica as in Pompeii you still see the marks of the chisel on the stone, but in neither place do you see the chisel: in Pompeii it rusted away, in Mexico it was stolen long ago.

THE HOUSE OF MYSTERY

At the further entrance to the Avenida del Palacio Legislativo, just at the point where that dead street debouches from the lively Plaza de la Reforma, stands a gloomy building in which, however, there is always great activity, day and night — an activity which is in striking contrast to the sepulchral stillness that broods over the derelict Palacio itself. In front of it there are always puffing motor-cars, groups of gesticulating men, and armed sentries walking to and fro. After six o'clock in the morning there is even a coffee stall on the edge of the pavement a little way from the entrance; and its proprietor does a roaring trade with armed men in uniform, who eat and drink with the avidity of people who have been up all night. It was about six o'clock in the morning that I first saw it, and I had a cup of coffee there myself.

This house of mystery has a garden, guarded by iron railings, in which there is an iron gate; and through this gate automobiles dash in and out every few minutes. Even about these automobiles there is something mysterious. They travel at quite an illegal speed; but they evidently have the right of way, for their chauffeurs blow the police whistle which gives them precedence over all other traffic. The

chauffeurs exchange rapid passwords with the sentries before the gates fly open. Then they are engulfed in the gloom of the umbrageous inner courtyard, and the gates close again with an iron clang which, for some inexplicable reason, shakes my very soul with fear. And as I look on, fascinated and mystified, the gates open again for a large, hearse-like motor-car on its way out. Several such cars pass out while I am looking. Grim and smooth and silent and painted black all over, they remind me horribly of the vans, freighted with death, that used, in the days of the Terror, to issue in the early morning from the Lubyanka at Moscow. This daily exodus impresses itself ineffaceably on my mind owing to the fact that it was from behind prison bars that I saw them leave.

THE NOTORIOUS INSPECCION GENERAL

A sad train of thought is started, and the chill in my soul deepens as I hear the clank of chains, the shooting of bolts and bars. Peering into the first garden, I perceive, under the shadow of the trees, a collection of people, varied as life itself. Most of them are officers, soldiers, policemen and uniformed officials; but there are also women, some weeping hysterically and with children hanging on to their skirts, some laughing and joking with the men. The painted lips and cheeks of the latter women leave no doubt as to their profession. Were it not for the motor-cars, I would describe the whole scene as medieval. The odd jumble of buildings beyond and around the patio is distinctly medieval. But, lo! There are inscriptions painted on them—*Museo de Criminologia* (Museum of Criminology), *Escuela Cientifica de Policia* (Scientific Police School). And, through the barred windows cadaverous faces peer at me. Good God! it is all clear to me now! This is the notorious *Inspeccion General*, the General Headquarters of the ordinary and the extraordinary police of the whole elaborate organization of repression which enables the Lenin of Mexico to rule. This is the headquarters of General Roberto Cruz, the Mexican Dzerzhinsky! This is the Lubyanka of Mexico!

In the inner court I can see the stone wall, pitted with bullets, against which so many victims have stood during the past two months. Only yesterday four men, one of them a priest, were executed there on the accusation of having tried

to assassinate General Obregon, but there was no public trial. General Roberto Cruz simply gave out a statement that the men had confessed, but could produce no documentary proof of his assertion.

Near the wall at one point, the ground is trampled and black with congealed blood. Further up, it is covered with autumnal leaves. In another part of the garden is a wooden stake, commonly used by the soldier-executioners for practice-firing, and now almost shot to pieces.

THE RESULT OF "RECKLESS ENTHUSIASM"

Fragments of President Wilson's speeches about Mexico come back at this moment to my memory. Incongruous? No, for it was President Wilson who installed the *Constitutionalistas* here:

"There is one thing I have got a great enthusiasm about, I might almost say a reckless enthusiasm, and that is human liberty."

God help us!

My eyes seek again the derelict Legislature, and return to the prison bars, and the haggard faces behind them. This, then, is what Mr. Wilson's "reckless enthusiasm" has brought Mexico to. This is the result of his verbose confidence in the promises of the "patriots," in the loud asseverations of the democratic revolutionaries!

It is a pity that he did not confine his destructive exuberance to the enforcement of the Fifteenth Amendment to the American Constitution, and insist on the Southern States letting the negroes vote. Charity begins at home; and if Mr. Wilson had allowed his "reckless enthusiasm" for "human liberty" to run wild in Mississippi and South Carolina instead of Mexico, where he had no business, there might be chaos today north of the Rio Grande, and prosperous tranquillity south of it.

Here, on the first floor is the office of the brutal Roberto. Down beneath my feet are the terrible subterranean dungeons, ankle-deep in filth and water, where the enemies of the Dictator are imprisoned and tortured.

This, then, is the point where the grand march of the Revolution stopped—at a prison gate! The "heroes," and the Generals, and the *Constitutionalistas,* and the fiery *revolutionarios,* (all of them with hip-pocket revolver)—they all

halted here. They never reached the Palacio Legislativo, part of which is now used as a garage for the Black Marias and the funeral autos of liberty.

But, hark! there is a trampling of feet, mixed with loud words of command and the jingle of steel. A crowd of prisoners is approaching. They are surrounded by police or soldiers, in khaki uniforms and with rifles and bayonets. Even at a distance, I can see that this crowd is curiously heterogenous. When it comes nearer, I distinguish men and women, boys and girls, females in gaudy attire, and ladies in modest *mantillas.* Nearer still, and I can make out, with a shock of astonishment, obvious convent girls, with the white veils and the stainless lilies of First Communion, only that the veils are rent, and the flowers torn, and the young eyes red with weeping, and the smooth cheeks crimson with shame. And no wonder there is shame, for alongside these pure girls, and even handcuffed to them, stagger blasphemous and drunken harlots, the painted dregs of the Mexican brothels.

THE CRIME (?) OF HEARING MASS

Side by side with the daughters of *hidalgos,* with the young sons of the *Conquistadores,* walk flagrantly criminal types, men and women with vice and degradation stamped on their features. From my experience of old as a police court reporter I should say that they belong to that class of criminal whose case is heard behind closed doors, for the Mexican criminal generally looks his part.

But how on earth did such ill-assorted people manage to come together? I turn for enlightenment to a civilian by-stander, a middle-aged, respectably-dressed man, whose accent proclaims him to be a Spaniard; and he courteously explains. It is Sunday morning; and General Roberto Cruz makes a practice of sending out his myrmidons early every Sunday morning in order to arrest Catholics who go to Mass. Without warrants, without official documents of any kind, and in defiance of the Constitution, these policemen break into private houses where Mass is being said and march the whole congregation off to Headquarters—as these unfortunates are being marched now.

"But apparently the police also break into brothels," said I, glancing at the painted women. "No," replied the

gentleman, "they never do. That would be a violation of the Constitution."

He smiled faintly, and then added: "These women you are looking at must have been arrested for fighting in the streets, or they were probably mixed up in some robbery or murder. There is now a robbery or murder every night, and on Saturday night there are generally quite a number."

So this explains it. The secret Masses are always said in the gray of the morning and very often long before dawn, so that the sleuth-hounds of Roberto generally manage to kill two birds with one stone; they arrest the girl who has risen before the sun in order to hear Mass, and at the same time they arrest the murderer staggering home to bed after a night in a gambling den, or the prostitute trying to escape after having cut her lover's throat or stolen his money. And as they march them all together, they treat them exactly alike.

DIABOLIC AND ANGELIC

The bedraggled procession comes closer. In it there are diabolical faces and faces which are angelic. The diabolical faces are brazen; the angelic faces are crimson with shame. Not all the women are young; some are of mature age and even elderly. Several such women attract my attention for two reasons, the sweet and dignified gravity of their faces as well as the remarkably bad fit of their dresses. I learned later that they were nuns, for whom secular clothing had been hastily found; and that General Cruz takes a diabolical pleasure in immuring these ladies with prostitutes and criminals. The Mexican files in the State Department at Washington contain complaints under this head from Mr. Sheffield, formerly American Ambassador in Mexico City. One such complaint is to the effect that several nuns were locked in cattle-cars with criminals and sent by railway to Manzanillo enroute to the terrible Islas Marias, whereof one is a Penal Colony for the most incorrigible criminals, the Devil's Island of the Pacific.

Some members of the procession are boys, evidently of pure Castilian descent, with deep-set and brilliant eye, bronzed cheek, and something proud and sumptuous in the modeling of lip and chin. Some are old men with finely-shaped heads and the singular dignity of the Spanish grandee one sees depicted on the canvas of Velasquez.

But in the procession there are also men and women of pure Indian type, mechanics in their blue overalls, *peons* wrapt in their *panchos,* brown-faced housemaids, hardy old market women with smiles on their lips and innumerable wrinkles on their faces. Their presence proves, what is proved by much other evidence, that Mexico is Catholic to the marrow of its bones, quite as Catholic as Belgium or Bavaria, more Catholic even than Ireland, for it has no Ulster and no Belfast. After having traversed every part of Mexico and mixed with every class of the people, I have come to the conclusion that ninety per cent of the people are opposed to Calles.

LARGELY A MATTER OF GRAFT

In one of his great oratorical outbursts about Mexico—it was at Indianapolis on January 8, 1915—President Wilson yelled: "I am for the eighty per cent!" meaning thereby that he meant to give the vote to the Mexican *peon.* The result of his meddlesome interference was that all Mexicans lost their votes, and that the country is now ruled dictatorially by two men. Ninety per cent of the Mexican people are now against Calles, but the American President and the American newspapers and the party leaders seem to take the matter very quietly.

The prisoners have now entered the garden, throughout which the harlots diffuse a powerful odor of cheap scent. The more respectable members of the party are bundled unceremoniously into the Identification Bureau, where they are photographed, and have their finger-prints taken. Most of the poor people are sent away. Is it because there is something, after all, in the President's boast that he is the Friend of the Poor and the Downtrodden? No, it is because they have no money. Yes, this "religious" persecution is largely a matter of "graft" or financial corruption. Save in the case of Calles alone, any fanaticism that you see is not religious fanaticism but financial fanaticism. With Calles it is different: of no religion himself, he is consumed by a passion of hate against the Catholic Church that makes him grow black in the face, smite the table, and behave generally like a madman every time that it is mentioned. The explanation may lie far back in the history of his Turkish ancestors; but, so far, nobody has discovered it.

Like nearly all the Presidents of Mexico, Calles is dishonest; but no amount of money will ever bribe him to let go his hold of a priest. General Roberto Cruz is not so scrupulous. He imposes heavy fines, quite illegally, on persons caught attending Mass. Probably he sends some of this money to the Treasury, but it is reported that he puts $25,000 a week into his own pocket, and has been doing so since the persecution commenced. He knows that his victims belong to rich families, to that wealthy, conservative class which, after all, built up Mexico but which is now being rapidly impoverished. He capitalizes the natural anxiety of parents to rescue their young sons and daughters from the crowded dungeons and their foul, contageous diseases; and his calculations are generally right, for he succeeds as a rule in getting a fine of 500 *pesos* ($250) for the release of each prisoner. In the case of priests, his fixed tariff is $500.

BUSINESS AT A STANDSTILL

But while Headquarters is thus working day and night, at full pressure, business is languishing, commercial houses are failing, and emigration to the United States is assuming alarming proportions. In the fashionable shopping center of the Capital you might watch the shops for a whole day without seeing a single customer cross the threshold; but you will not have to watch Headquarters long before you see Catholic prisoners being marched in. So busy are the police in arresting Catholics and ferreting out their secret printing presses, that they are neglecting the ordinary criminal, whose audacity is therefore increasing every day. Pickpockets swarm to such an extent that it is very unsafe to carry one's money in an outside pocket. I, myself, was once robbed of my purse while buying postage stamps at the General Post Office; and, when I complained, I was told that the place is full of pickpockets who are having a glorious time, thanks to the fact that the police are always absent on priest-hunts—which pay them better.

Sometimes these priest-hunts bring them far afield; and, moreover, prisoners, accused of hearing Mass, are brought every day by railway from distant States to Headquarters at Mexico City. I take the following paragraph from the *Excelsior*, the leading newspaper of the Federal Capital. It is

typical of similar paragraphs which frequently appear in the newspapers:

ATLIXCO, PUEBLA. — *Tonight the agents of the Inspection General of Police of this metropolis arrested Dr. Edward M. Texcucano and the Rev. Silverio Aguilar, formerly rector of the parish of La Natividad. The arrest of both these gentlemen was effected in the house of Dr. Texcucano while the Rev. Fr. Aguilar was conducting Catholic ceremonies without having complied with the conditions laid down in Article 130 of our Magna Charta.*

Both prisoners have been placed at the disposition of Senor General Don Roberto Cruz, Inspector General of Police in Mexico City; and they will therefore be transferred to Mexico City today.

A SYSTEM OF TERRORIZATION

In such cases, the prisoners will be released after having been made to pay large sums of money to their captors. But it is not only the police who are making money in this way; the army is enriching itself even more by the employment of similar methods. While I was traveling in Jalisco, a landowner told me a curious story on this subject. One day he discovered that two of his *peons* had run away to join the insurgents and had taken with them two of his horses. He immediately informed the local police; and, to make things doubly sure, he afterwards called personally on the General who was in charge of military operations against the rebels, and told him what had happened.

The General said that obviously his informant was not to blame for the rebels getting two more men and two more horses; so that my friend felt convinced that no harm would befall him. He was mistaken, however, for soon afterwards he was arrested on the charge of having aided the insurgents, and was confined in a small cell adjacent to a cemetery, the object being to give him the impression that he was about to be executed.

This system of terrorization, I might remark, is now universal among the Mexican soldiers, who generally place their victim against a wall and make preparations as if to shoot him, even when their only object is to terrify him and make him hand over to them all his money. My friend was

finally released on promising to pay a large sum of money to the General responsible for his detention.

The hills around the Capital are now so infested by bandits that it is dangerous to go by oneself ten miles out of the city; and consequently all picnics to the hills have been abandoned by the young people of the British and American communities. Ambassador Sheffield had to give up his golf at a country club on the Guernavaca road, owing to the danger from bandits; and Ambassador Dwight W. Morrow has to be even more careful. From his office windows, General Roberto Cruz can see hills which have been quite abandoned to the bandits.

TWO PRESIDENTIAL THEORIES

This is only one aspect of the present condition of affairs in Mexico; and it is not an aspect on which Ambassador Morrow is touching in his negotiations with President Calles, those negotiations being strictly confined to American grievances on the subject of the agrarian laws and the laws affecting petroleum. The Wilson theory, that Washington would only permit good men to become Latin American Presidents, has been followed by the Coolidge theory that Mexico can do whatever it likes so long as it does not confiscate American property and pays the Committee of Bankers their interest. In like manner the American newspapers have swung from one extreme to the other; it cannot be because of any reaction against militarism due to the Great War, for in 1919, the entire Press of America clamored for "drastic measures" in order to suppress this "international nuisance," that is, Mexico. Now it sternly refuses to print accounts like the above, even when such accounts are sent by its own correspondents. With some honorable exceptions, the American newspapers toady to Calles, beslaver him with praise, describe him as Mexico's "man of iron," publish interviews with him, and even accept articles from him.

America's record in this Mexican business has, with a few bright intervals, been consistently bad. We see today the damage which her professors, preachers, and politicians have wrought in China and the bad results of an American education on Chinese students; and from that we can estimate the damage that America must have done for over fifty years in Mexico, which is so near, and which has also been

demoralized by oil men, concession hunters, kept correspondents, paid propagandists, and returned Mexicans, educated in the United States. Infinite harm has also been done by American Protestant organizations, which spend an enormous amount of money but only succeed in causing discord and disintegration.

During the Carranza rebellion, many Methodist and Baptist preachers accepted commissions in the rebel army, and some of them still work for the *Constitutionalistas,* and are assisted by catechists, Y. M. C. A. men, and various kinds of demented "uplift" workers with a very strong bias toward Bolshevism. In June last, General Amaro, the Secretary of War, published in Jalisco a Communist organ called *El Rojo* (the Red); and, judging by its contents, his principal contributor seemed to have been educated in some American Evangelical seminary. All this work simply tends to the utter demoralization of Mexico; and, if Catholicism is uprooted—as is not at all improbable—its place will certainly not be taken by Protestantism, which Calles fears far more than he fears Catholicism, because of the Americanization which it inevitably entails. But for the moment, he uses Protestantism in his fight with Rome; and, though every Catholic church and seminary in Mexico is closed, all the Protestant churches and seminaries are open and functioning.

THE AMERICAN ATTITUDE

Many Americans dismiss the Mexican question with an uncomplimentary remark about "Dagoes" who are unfit to govern themselves; but it is America who is responsible for the present chaos in Mexico. America's whole policy for the last fifty years has either been to annex Mexican territory or else to force the Mexicans to Americanize themselves and their institutions. The United States has permitted every kind of crank to launch attacks from the north side of the border on good Conservative administrations in Mexico; but has always prevented exiled Conservatives from launching similar attacks on Mexican Governments which called themselves Liberal, but which were chaotic, corrupt, and hopeless.

Juarez, who launched Mexico on her present wrong course, was assisted to an almost incredible extent by the Government of the United States with arms, ammunition, cannon, and money: at one time the whole output of a great

arms factory in the United States was poured in a steady stream into Mexico. Without this assistance he would have been beaten by the Conservative Miramon, with the result that Mexico's development would have been normal. There would have been a period of oligarchical rule such as obtained in England throughout all the eighteenth century; and, after that, a slow but sure development in freedom. A Dictatorship did come later with Diaz; but it was overthrown by a rebellion started on the north side of the Rio Grande by Francisco I. Madero, an unbalanced visionary who had been educated in an American college—non-Catholic.

THE ENGLISH POINT OF VIEW

With Huerta, Mexico got back on the rails again, for Huerta was a Conservative, and had in his Cabinet exceptionally able and high-minded men. President Wilson would not have him. He had set his heart on making the dreamy, socialistic, and anti-clerical Carranza President of Mexico; and finally he gained his end by bombarding Vera Cruz, sending General Pershing into Mexico, and allowing Carranza to get as much ammunition as he could carry across the frontier, while American warships seized, in the harbor of Vera Cruz, all the arms Huerta had imported from Europe for the purpose of defending his Government against Carranza, Villa and other brigands.

While pursuing this policy, Wilson continued to insist most strenuously that he would not interfere in Mexican affairs. "It is none of my business, and it is none of yours" he said in his Jackson Day address, delivered at Indianapolis on January 8, 1915. From the English point of view, Wilson was not "playing the game"; but because Sir Lionel Carden, the British Minister to Mexico, thought so and said so, President Wilson induced the British Government to recall him.

Finally, Huerta fell, for he could not maintain his position in face of President Wilson's opposition; and the Constitutionalists have been in power ever since. Washington continues to support them, probably because of a fear that a Conservative regime might develop into a monarchy; but such development is quite out of the question, and, even if it were possible, no monarchy could make such trouble for Americans and for the American Government as the present

Dictatorship has done. Since 1914, 546 Americans have been murdered in Mexico, and 470,000 acres of land have been taken from Americans without compensation. Yet, when General de la Huerta rebelled against Obregon and Calles at the end of 1923, President Coolidge saved the Duumviri by selling them a large supply of arms and ammunition, including 15,000 Enfield rifles and five million rounds of ammunition. A year ago Calles sent those arms to Nicaraguan insurgents who were trying to overthrow a Government which was friendly to the United States, and to establish one which was unfriendly.

There may still be optimists who believe that there can never again be oppression or injustice in the world because of the powerful influences watching for it, in order to expose and crush it.

"First, there is the Press," these optimists will say, "always ready to expose the tyrant and the wrong-doer, whether he be in Moscow, in Rome, or in Rumania. Secondly, there is Labor, whose powerful voice will always be raised in favor of the oppressed, whatever be his race or color. Thirdly, there are those marvellous philanthropic associations which spend all their time and money denouncing Mussolini, pleading for the recognition of Russia, and even looking after the welfare of lost cats."

SILENCE OF THE PRESS

My study of the Mexican question has made me profoundly doubtful of these great influences. When a Conservative Government takes vigorous action against subversive elements, they will all be on the alert, and on the side of the subversive elements; but when a Socialist or Communist or Anti-Christian Government persecutes its Christian subjects, they will maintain Sphynx-like silence. Even in Conservative papers there was no outcry against the atrocities of Calles like that raised in the Labor papers against Mussolini and in favor of Sacco and Vanzetti. The greatest newspaper in New York is run on the principle, "No crusade!" Owing to its adherence to this principle it manages to keep a correspondent in Moscow, another in Rome, and a third in Mexico City. The Moscow correspondent sends out large chunks of Red propaganda. The Rome correspondent praises Mussolini. The correspondent in Mexico

City flatters Calles. But they all "get the news across." They all "deliver the goods."

As for the American Federation of Labor, despite the fact that it contains a strong Catholic element, and that two of its vice-presidents are Catholics of Irish descent, it has not only failed to protest against any of the murders Calles has committed, but it has supported him, championed him, hailed him as the Man of the People, a Friend of Labor, a Great Proletarian. The fifty Humane and Philanthropic associations of the United States are the worst of all; they have vigorously taken the side of Calles, and are busily distributing his propaganda.

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THE PRESENT Mexican Government under the leadership of President Calles is apparently friendly to the United States. In reality it is violently anti-American. Since 1914, 546 American citizens have been murdered in Mexico and 470,000 acres of land have been taken from Americans without compensation.

POSING AS Liberals who are whole-heartedly for progress and the welfare of the nation, the Mexican Government is savagely robbing millions of people of their inherent natural rights.

WHILE pretending to guarantee freedom of worship and liberty of conscience, the Mexican Government is carrying on a determined war against God—a war, that is not only openly anti-Catholic, but secretly anti-Protestant and anti-Christian.

For the Sake of Justice and Decency, Please Spread It!